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# BIOLOGICAL BULLETIN

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## HYDROIDS IN THE ILLINOIS RIVER.<sup>1</sup>

FRANK SMITH.

During the past summer (1909) while at Havana, Ill., in connection with the reopening of the Biological Station of the Illinois State Laboratory of Natural History, the writer was surprised to find at one location numerous colonies of a hydroid which presumably belongs to the genus *Cordylophora*. A superficial examination of the animal and of the literature involved has not disclosed any reason why it may not prove to be *C. lacustris* Allman which is a species of hydroid commonly found in brackish water and less frequently in fresh water.

Numerous colonies were found July 30 in a partially submerged willow thicket near the north end of Quiver Lake which is really a part of the Illinois River near Havana. The majority of the colonies were attached to the submerged portions of living willow shoots while a few were found on the leaves and stems of other plants. A later visit was made to the same locality October 16 when the water of the lake was somewhat lower and no longer covered the spot at which the July collections were made. In the part of the thicket which was still submerged, numerous colonies were found attached to dead sticks and branches that projected from the bottom toward the surface. At each visit the collections were made in water less than two feet deep and over which a considerable layer of *Lemna* had accumulated under the influence of west or northwest winds. In mid-summer the colonies were in dense shade and were associated with a great variety of living organisms among which bryozoans were especially abundant.

<sup>1</sup>Contributions from the Zoölogical Laboratory, University of Illinois, under the direction of Henry B. Ward, No. 2.

In size, mode of branching, number of gonophores and of embryos in the gonophores the colonies are similar to those of *C. lacustris*, when found in strictly fresh water, as described by Pauly<sup>1</sup> and others. The main stems are but 1-1.5 cm. in height, but sparsely branched and the branches commonly bear but one gonophore which has usually not more than five or six embryos. Gonophores were present in July but not in October.

As opportunity has permitted, other places about Havana have been examined for hydroids, but thus far without success.

On August 4, during a brief visit to the Illinois River bottomlands and lakes near Hennepin, I noticed on a partially submerged concrete wall extensive areas bearing organisms that seemed to be hydroid colonies similar to those found at Havana. As there was no time nor equipment for examination of the living material nor for its proper preservation, there is nothing at hand to serve as a basis for the identification of this form except the macerated remains of a few colonies which were scraped off and kept in a vial of water. The skeletal remains of the colonies are indistinguishable from those of the Havana species and I feel quite sure that the forms are identical and that the species is well established at two places in the Illinois River nearly a hundred miles apart.

How long this hydroid has been represented in the Illinois River is problematical, but to the writer it seems somewhat improbable that it was in the Havana region before the opening of the Chicago Drainage Canal, as for several years prior to 1900 various observers connected with the Biological Station searching persistently for all kinds of animal life found no such hydroid forms. There is at least a possibility that this hydroid may be found about the docks in the Chicago region where it may have been introduced by vessels from the Atlantic coast and then subsequently have been carried through the drainage canal into the Illinois River. More extended observations on its distribution in the Mississippi Valley are highly desirable.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS,  
November, 13, 1909.

<sup>1</sup> *Zoölogischer Anzeiger*, Vol. XXIII., pp. 546-551.